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Conservation Resources

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Plan of Reforestation:

[Extract from Thirteenth Annual Report of the Forestry Commission of Minnesota.]

The pine forests of Minnesota have been logged sixty years and most of the timber has been shipped out of the State. In a few more years the original pine will be gone. Already thirty thousand car loads of forest products are brought into Minnesota annually from the Pacific coast.

The population of the United States since its first settlement has increased at the average rate of 18 per cent every ten years, and in eighty years will reach the amazing number of 320,000,000! Forest products will be in much greater demand then than now. If we neglect suitable measures of reforestation our posterity will be ashamed of us.

Forestry is not an expenditure. It is a savings bank investment. The great thing in forestry is that it utilizes third and fourth rate—sandy, hilly and rocky—land that is unfit for agriculture. The yield tables of Germany show that an acre of such land planted as part of a forest, with pine, on forestry principles—seedling trees two or three years old, planted at an average distance apart of four or five feet, it being necessary to have forest crowded when young to promote height growth—will in eighty years produce 18,000 feet board measure. The surviving trees—for the greater number would have died out—would be from 12 to 15 inches in diameter breast high. They would continue, if left standing, to grow many years after they had reached the age of eighty years, but not at a rate to earn good interest.

If the State this year planted 37,500 acres of forestry land in the same way, and continued to do as much every year for eighty years, it would then have a normal forest of 3,000,000 acres—not in one body but in scattered localities—of the value of probably \$200,000,000, yielding

a net revenue of 3 per cent per annum. From the 37,500 acres planted this year there could then be cut 675,000,000 feet board measure of logs and the same amount every year thereafter perpetually. Under forestry management a larger percentage of the cut-over area would become reforested by natural seeding than is the case under present methods of logging (now only about 5 per cent of cut-over land becomes well stocked with pine from natural seeding), the blank spaces would be promptly replanted and a sustained yield secured.

If the State had 37,500 acres of third or fourth rate land to plant with forest we would find that on an average 5 per cent of it was already well stocked with pine or some other valuable timber, and that another 5 per cent of the area was rock or water, which we would call blank spaces; deducting this 10 per cent from 37,500 would leave 33,750 acres to be actually planted. In other words, for every 1,000 acres of third or fourth rate land only 900 acres on an average would have to be planted.

In planting about 200 acres substantially in the way above mentioned the State has found that two men can plant one acre a day, the whole cost, exclusive of land, being about \$6.00 per acre. To plant 37,500 acres each spring would require 2,500 employes thirty days. Although some thousands of men will for a few years be coming out of the logging camps every spring, some of whom could be employed in planting, and although the planting would be done in half a dozen or more counties, still it is not likely the State could for a number of years plant 37,500 acres annually. The State should not undertake to do any more than it can do economically and well. It should, however, engage in the work with energy.

Prussia plants and sows 45,000 acres of state forest annually. The other German states in the aggregate plant more.

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I believe the State will be able to purchase forestry land at an average price of not exceeding \$2.50 per acre, but as the State has some school land that is only fit for forestry, but which according to the constitution must be offered for sale at not less than \$5.00 per acre, authority should be granted for paying \$5.00 per acre when necessary.

The ordinary revenue is not sufficient to permit the legislature to appropriate money enough to carry into effect a plan of reforestation as extensive as the above. To accomplish this there should be an additional tax of three-tenths of one mill on all taxable property in the State, being only thirty cents on each thousand dollars. This would raise about \$300,000 annually and be sufficient to carry the plan into effect. That the plan may be permanent it should be authorized by a constitutional amendment such as herewith proposed. That it may not seem extravagant let me mention that for forestry Pennsylvania appropriates annually \$400,000 and New York \$550,000.

If the next legislature were to submit the amendment it could not be voted on until the general election in 1911, and if adopted no money would be available under it sooner than 1913.

Few states have the natural resources to undertake such a system of reforestation. Minnesota's natural advantages admit of her doing it. If she has the public spirit to undertake it she would at once be in the front rank, if not the leader, of all the American States in reforestation.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment.

To secure a sustained yield of timber for the use of the people of this State the proper officers shall annually levy and collect a tax of three-tenths of one mill on each dollar of the taxable property within this State, the proceeds of which shall be used for the purchase of land for the State adapted for forest at not over \$5.00 per acre, and for the production and maintenance thereon of forest according to forestry principles. Unexpended balances shall not lapse but constitute a fund for forestry purposes. The timber produced thereon shall be sold at a fair valuation and the revenue therefrom be paid into the State treasury, except that one quarter of the net revenue shall be paid to the towns in which the land is situated, in aid of public schools and roads. Should any tract acquired be found better adapted for any other purpose than the production of timber, it may be sold or leased and the proceeds used for acquiring or developing forestry land. Until otherwise directed by the legislature, which may supplement these provisions with necessary enactments, the State Forestry Board shall draw and disburse the money hereby provided and purchase, manage and control the lands and forests. No money shall be paid for any tract until the attorney general shall certify to the validity of the title. It shall be competent for two successive regular legislatures, by a two-thirds vote of each house, to alter or repeal any of these provisions.

LETTERS FROM VARIOUS CITIZENS OF MINNESOTA APPROVING
THE FOREGOING PLAN OF REFORESTATION, IN THE
ORDER OF THEIR DATE.

(From Mr. J. M. Underwood, experienced nurseryman and
formerly President of the State Horticultural Society.)

LAKE CITY, MINN., Jan. 22, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I have just read over the plan you recommend for reforestation. You certainly have put the subject in a logical and conclusive manner, and I heartily endorse the proposed constitutional amendment. There is nothing of greater importance to our State and country than of promoting moisture in our climate and retaining it, and in no way can it be done except by reforesting our cut-over forests and adding to them. Commending you for your efficient service in this work, I am,

Very truly yours,

J. M. UNDERWOOD.

(From Hon. S. G. Comstock, ex-Member of Congress.)

MOORHEAD, MINN., Jan. 22, 1908.

Hon. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear General:

I have read with much interest your plan of reforestation. The need for some energetic action in that line is apparent to all familiar with the facts. I have heard no plan so feasible and practical as the one you outline. In my judgment the State will do well to adopt and put in early execution your recommendations.

Very sincerely yours,

S. G. COMSTOCK.

(From Mr. J. H. Beek, Secretary St. Paul Jobbers' and Manufacturers' Association.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 22, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
State Capitol, City.

Dear Sir:

I have very carefully thought over your plan of reforestation as outlined in your letter of January 14th, and I am heartily in favor of it. Unless the State of Minnesota enters upon some comprehensive plan of reforestation and pursues it continuously the time is not far distant when the people will realize how costly has been the indifference and shortsightedness of our lawmakers.

Yours truly,

J. H. BEEK.

(From General C. McC. Reeve.)

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., Jan. 22, 1908.

General C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

My Dear General:

I have examined carefully your plan of reforestation and I certainly approve most heartily of it. To my mind no one question is deserving of more prompt and intelligent action on the part of the proper authorities than the question of providing an adequate timber supply for future generations.

Yours very truly,

C. McC. REEVE.

(From Mr. Daniel R. Noyes.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 23, 1908.

Hon. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of Jan. 20 received. I am heartily in favor of the plan proposed to "secure a sustained yield of timber" in this State. The matter of "reforestation" is one of great importance to Minnesota, and some practical plan of reforestation is of the utmost importance to our State, and cannot be entered upon too soon.

Yours truly,

DANIEL R. NOYES.

(From Ex-Lieut. Governor A. E. Rice.)

WILLMAR, MINN., Jan. 23, 1908.

Hon. C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

My Dear General:

The necessity of reforestation under such a plan as you propose, or something similar, ought to be given serious consideration by every thinking person who has at heart the needs of the State and the welfare of its future generations.

Sincerely yours,

A. E. RICE.

(From Mr. Robert A. Kirk.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 24, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I have your valued favor of the 21st, enclosing statement of your plan of reforestation.

I am sure that most thoughtful men are disposed to regard this subject as one of the most important subjects before our people. Already valuable time has been lost in getting to work on it, and it is to be hoped that our next legislature will take favorable action on it. I do not attempt to recommend any particular plan for this purpose. I have not given the matter careful attention, and am not qualified to express an opinion of the value of any plan under consideration.

I feel deeply, however, that this work should be undertaken at the earliest day possible, and that it should be put into operation as soon as the large body of intelligent men who have been giving this subject careful consideration can unitedly work together in carrying out this object.

It is a great work and deserves the most thoughtful consideration of all public spirited citizens.

Yours truly,

R. A. KIRK.

(From Hon. W. P. Allen, former Senator from Cloquet District, and for many years Vice Pres. C. N. Nelson Lumber Company.)

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I have carefully read your circular offering a plan of reforestation, to be submitted to the people of Minnesota through a constitutional amendment.

With the general purpose of the proposed plan I am, as you know, heartily in sympathy, and I do not know of any one in the State better fitted by temperament and experience to work out the details than yourself. The adoption of some permanent system of scientific forestry by the State of Minnesota is, in my opinion, the only way to avert a disastrous famine in forest products in the near future, and, what is worse, a steady decrease in rainfall and the consequent lessening of agricultural production. No dependence can be put on private initiative and enterprise, even when encouraged by tax exemption or other subsidy.

It is a work to be undertaken by the whole State, since its ultimate benefits accrue to the treeless portions of the State even more than to the regions included in the forested limits.

Very truly yours,

W. P. ALLEN.

(From Mr. James J. Hill, Great Northern Railroad Company.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan 25, 1908.

Mr. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dear Sir:

Acknowledging receipt of your favor of the 24th instant, I beg to say that I have read your plan for reforestation of cut-over pine lands in this State, and find it well worthy of the best efforts of all the people in the State. Our forest, once a rich heritage, is rapidly disappearing. Except for the areas on the Pacific coast, the forests of the whole country will in twenty years be practically exhausted, and then we will be compelled to begin in earnest what you recommend now.

Yours truly,

(From Hon. Wm. B. Dean, Ex-Senator from Ramsey County.)
REDLANDS, CALIF., Jan. 26, 1908.

My Dear General Andrews:

Yours of the 20th instant, forwarded from St. Paul, is at hand.
I know of nothing relating to the material interests of Minnesota that should command the hearty support of our people more than the subject of reforestation.

The plan proposed in the amendment to the Constitution seems practical and common sense. If it should ever be put into operation, future generations will bless the wise men who devised it. I hope you will be successful in your efforts.

Yours truly,

WM. B. DEAN.

(From Mr. Thos. Owens, Gen. Sup't. Duluth & Iron Range R. R.)
TWO HARBORS, MINN., Jan. 27th, 1908.

Mr. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 24th inst., with your plan of reforestation; and I assure you that I heartily concur in same. In fact, I am a strong believer in the fact that we should plant trees for the coming generation.

Yours truly,

THOS. OWENS.

(From President Northrop, State University.)

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., Jan. 28, 1908.

Hon. C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I have read with interest the plan of reforestation recommended by the Forestry Commissioner of Minnesota, and while I cannot go into a minute examination of the plan, I may say unhesitatingly that the plan seems to me to be feasible and desirable. It is of the utmost importance that the land in Minnesota that is not adapted to agriculture should be restored to forests, if possible; and I have faith in your knowledge of the subject and your wisdom that justifies me in approving your plan.

Very truly yours

CYRUS NORTHROP.

(From Mr. Geo. Rupley of Duluth.)
DULUTH, MINN., Jan. 20th, 1908.

Hon. C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I have your favor of the 28th instant enclosing copy of proposed constitutional amendment.

I certainly approve of the plan of State forestry outlined therein and trust there will be no unnecessary delay in its adoption.

Very truly yours,
GEORGE RUPLEY.

(From Mr. J. W. Cooper, of Griggs, Cooper & Co., St. Paul.)
ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 30, 1908.

Mr. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
State Capitol, City.

Dear Sir:

I have read with a good deal of interest the printed communication sent me in your favor of Jan. 28th. I have long thought that the State could well afford to spend sufficient means to eventually cover lands that are unfit for agriculture with timber of various kinds. I believe there is no question of more importance than the question of reforestation, and I regret so few people give the matter any thought. If it was possible to place before the people of Minnesota what reforestation means to future generations, I have no doubt a large majority of the people would favor liberal use of public moneys for such a scheme. I assure you it will be my pleasure to do anything in my power to assist you in the matter.

Yours very truly,
J. W. COOPER.

(From Mr. T. G. Walther of St. Paul.)
ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 29, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

The subject of the restoration of our pine forests is very interesting to me.

I fully believe that the United States ought to take hold of this

subject and carry it out to its fullest possibility, but it would also be a grand idea for the State of Minnesota.

In this State we have many thousands of acres of land which is really waste and is only fit to raise pine trees,—in addition to that, the question of what the future generations will do if there is no pine is a very serious one. It is right that we who live at the present time should do all we can for the happiness and profit of the future, and I am very much in sympathy with your efforts to bring about the restoration of the forests.

Of course, you know much more about the detail than I do, but I assure you that if my assistance can be of benefit to you at any time I will be very glad indeed to give you my help to the fullest extent.

If a system of taxation is necessary, I will be very glad to put in my share,—in fact, anything that is done to restore our forests to the greatest possible extent will meet with my hearty approval.

Yours truly, T. G. WALTHER.

(From Hon. C. D. O'Brien.)

Mr. C. C. Andrews, ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 30, 1908.

Forestry Commissioner,

St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt to-day of your favor of the 30th inst., enclosing your plan for the reforestation of this State. The matter cannot be commended too highly, and is one of lasting importance. I sincerely trust that your plan will be carried out.

Sincerely yours, C. D. O'BRIEN.

(From President C. H. Cooper, State Normal School, Mankato.)

MANKATO, MINN., January 30, 1908.

General C. C. Andrews,

Forestry Commissioner,

St. Paul. Minn.

Dear Sir:

I am greatly interested in the effort that is being made for an amendment to our State Constitution, and the plan of reforestation contained in the amendment submitted to me meets my approval. I believe that the State should in fairness to the coming generations do what it can to restore the forests that have been destroyed; no investment could yield greater returns.

Very truly yours, C. H. COOPER.

(From Mr. Joseph McKibbin of St. Paul.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., Feb. 1st, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

My Dear Sir:

I have read your plan of reforestation with great interest, and while lacking the information to discuss it fully in all its details, the plan as a whole has my hearty endorsement.

Forestry is one of our greatest economic problems. It should especially command the attention of our more thoughtful citizens and legislators. When we are so resolved, we can extricate ourselves in a comparatively short time from most of our economic difficulties—but no amount of penitence and energetic reform can grow a pine forest in much less than a hundred years.

Individuals will not engage to any extent in enterprises from which they must wait a century for returns. Reforestation is peculiarly the work of the State and the nation, and a vigorous and broadspread start should at once be made in Minnesota.

Very truly yours,

JOSEPH MCKIBBIN.

(From Professor Thomas Shaw, of St. Anthony Park, Minn.

WILLISTON, N. D., Feb. 1st, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 28th ult. and the circular inclosed have reached me here. I take the first spare moment to reply. I have read what you say in the circular headed "Plan of Reforestation Recommended by the Forestry Commissioner of Minnesota," and am in hearty accord with the same. Minnesota will not be true to herself nor to her future citizens unless steps are taken at the earliest possible moment looking to reforestation under government supervision.

I am also in hearty accord with the proposition to ask for a Constitutional amendment on the general lines suggested by the Commissioner, but have not yet been able to give that study to this phase of the question which its importance demands

Truly yours,

THOMAS SHAW.

(From Hon. Daniel W. Lawler.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., Feb. 3, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear General:

I have carefully studied your plan of reforestation and your draft of the proposed Constitutional amendment to put it into effect.

I believe that your plan is feasible and that the commencement of the work should be no longer delayed. During the past several years I have carefully read in the newspapers the accounts of your efforts for the preservation and renewal of our forests, and I believe that the people of the State are under great obligations to you for the intelligent and efficient work which you have done.

Respectfully,

D. W. LAWLER.

(From J. W. Strong, President Emeritus, Carlton College, of Northfield, Minn.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF., Feb. 4, 1908.

Hon. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

My Dear Sir:

For many years I have been deeply interested in your earnest efforts to preserve the forests of Minnesota from needless waste—a waste far greater than most of our citizens appreciate. The importance of reforestation cannot be overestimated. The adoption of the Constitutional amendment suggested would, in time, accomplish what President Roosevelt so wisely calls “an imperative business necessity.” I sincerely hope your plan may be carried out at the earliest possible date.

With personal regards,

Very cordially yours

JAS. W. STRONG.

(From Mr. L. W. Ayer, Experienced Woodsman and Timber Estimator.)

BELLE PRAIRIE, MINN., Feb. 3, 1908.

Gen. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 1st inst., enclosing "Plan of Reforestation," is before me. That this "Plan," or something equivalent thereto, is absolutely necessary to prevent the destruction of our entire timber resources in the near future, is evident to any one fully conversant with the facts; and I am glad to give it my unqualified endorsement.

Born and raised in the timber region of Minnesota and having followed the occupation of surveyor, cruiser and timber estimator for thirty-five years or more, my opportunities for observation have been perhaps as great as those of any person in the State.

Truly yours,
L. W. AYER.

(From Ex-Governor Lucius F. Hubbard.)

ST. PAUL, MINN., Feb. 6, 1908

General C. C. Andrews,
St. Paul, Minn.

My Dear Sir:

The proposition that Minnesota should adopt a definite policy for the protection and perpetuation of her forest products, such as would be provided by the Constitutional amendment you have suggested, is one of the important questions that ought to be pressed upon the attention of the people of the State.

This is one of the vital questions of the moment, and much farther postponement of its serious consideration and practical action thereon, would be a neglect of duty that would be severely judged by generations to follow us. I believe that our people are now educated upon this subject to a point where a decided opinion in favor of substantial State aid for the reforestation of our denuded timber tracts would be secured if an opportunity was given for its expression.

Very truly yours,
L. F. HUBBARD.

(From Mr. Frank J. Waterous.)
Gen. C. C. Andrews, ST. PAUL, MINN., Feb. 13, 1908.
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

My Dear Sir:

The proposed Constitutional amendment as recommended by you appears to me to be thoroughly practical and feasible, and I am satisfied that if the people of our State understood the situation that the amendment would carry by an overwhelming majority.

Is there not some way that a campaign of education can be inaugurated calling the people's attention to the importance of this matter?

Yours sincerely,

FRANK J. WATEROUS.

(From Hon. J. R. Morley, Chairman House Committee on
Forestry, Legislature, 1905.)
Gen. C. C. Andrews, OWATONNA, MINN., March 3, 1908.
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I have read with much interest the Constitutional amendment proposed by you for presentation to the next Legislature. And I can assure you that I am very much pleased to see these steps taken toward reforesting the cut-over lands not fit for agriculture.

And I think the State should take the necessary steps at once to reforest these cut-over lands. It is common knowledge that our forests are fast becoming depleted and the average citizen is indifferent about it. But if the State does not interest itself in the matter of reforestation it will never be done.

Such a system of reforestation as you propose would put Minnesota in the front rank in this particular enterprise, as she has been in everything she undertakes. Let the people become once interested in this matter and realize the benefit that will accrue to posterity, and your measure will become instantly popular. No time should be wasted, and I hope you will use every effort to get this matter before the people, to the end that public sentiment may crystallize and results may be got at the hands of the next legislature.

Yours truly,

J. R. MORLEY.

(From Mr. James E. McGee, of Hibbing, St. Louis County,
Timber Cruiser and Surveyor for Thirty Years.)

HIBBING, MINN., April 13, 1908.

Mr. C. C. Andrews,
Forestry Commissioner,
St. Paul, Minn.

My Dear Sir:

In answer to your letter of February 1st, 1908, will say that your plan of reforestation meets my approval; and also your proposed Constitutional amendment meets my approval. I have had thirty years' experience as timber cruiser, surveyor and logging superintendent in the forests of Northern Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Yours truly,

JAS. E. McGEE.

TAX EXEMPTION TO PROMOTE FORESTRY.

It is the opinion of some people that it would be good policy to encourage the production of timber by private parties by reducing the tax on land so used. In Minnesota it would require an amendment to the Constitution to authorize a lower rate of tax for forest than for other land. If any such measure were adopted there would have to be conditions that on land receiving the benefit of low tax, forest should be maintained according to forestry principles. It would not do to leave the land in a wild state to take its chances for natural forest growth, because in such a condition it might be very many years before the whole of it would become well stocked with valuable timber. There would have to be conditions that all of the land not well stocked naturally should be planted with valuable trees at proper distance apart—say not more than about five feet apart when two or three years old; also that the assessor should in person annually visit the land and report in detail as to the manner in which forest was maintained. Besides, the State forestry authority

would have to keep informed as to the way in which forest was maintained on private land receiving the benefit of tax exemption or reduction.

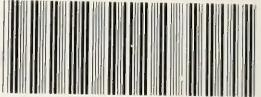
I believe the opinion which favors any such encouragement of private parties in forest production goes no further than to recommend that the land be taxed simply for its value as land, and that no tax be levied upon the timber until it is cut, and that the tax shall then be collected according to a fair value of the timber.

I do not believe that public opinion would favor treating large tracts of private land nor land of large corporations in this way; but only about 40, possibly 80, acres owned by any one individual.

If it should be found expedient, I would not object to the submission of an additional amendment to the Constitution of a clause in substance like the following, to form a part of and follow the amendment I have recommended for a tax levy of three-tenths of one mill on every dollar of taxable property, namely:

To encourage the production of timber by private parties, the Legislature may provide that not exceeding 80 acres of land belonging to any separate owner and used for the production of timber in a manner which the Legislature shall prescribe, shall be taxed only for its value as land; the timber to be exempt from tax until cut.

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